

ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS

Policies and Procedures

Title: Employee Responsibilities and Conduct

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Most guidance on employee responsibilities and conduct is located in publications that every employee of the Economics agencies receives upon entering duty. This P&P gives additional information on **political activities and outside employment**.

Table Of Contents

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | Introduction | 3 |
| | General Guidelines | 3 |
| | Policy | 3 |
| 2. | Political Activities | 3 |
| | Permitted Activities | 3 |
| | Prohibited Activities | 4 |
| | Employee Protection from Coercion | 5 |
| 3. | Approval of Outside Employment | 5 |
| 4. | Summary of Responsibilities | 6 |

1. Introduction

General Guidelines

Employees of the Economics agencies must perform their jobs impartially, and with utmost integrity. Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws, and ethical principles above private gain. When conducting business, employees are not allowed to

- hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of their duties.
- engage in financial transactions using nonpublic Government information.
- act partially or give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.
- use Federal property for unauthorized activities.
- engage in activities creating the appearance of conflict-of-interest.

Policy

The Economics agencies expect their employees to fulfill their duties and act in an ethical and professional manner at all times. Specific policies of the Economics agencies regarding employee responsibilities and conduct are identical to the policies set forth in “Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch,” published by the U.S. Office of Government Ethics, and “Employee Responsibilities and Conduct,” published by the Department's Office of Personnel. The EMS Personnel Division will issue a copy of both of these publications to each new employee during orientation. Employees should read and must adhere to these policies, directing all questions to the Personnel Division's Employee Relations Section.

The two publications mentioned above do not contain information on employee participation in political activities or outside employment, which are therefore covered specifically in this P&P. For more information, contact the Employee Relations Section.

2. Political Activities

Permitted Activities

Under the Hatch Act Reform Amendments of 1993, you, as an employee (except SES employees), may participate in the following political activities:

- campaign, on a partisan basis, for or against partisan candidates or issues by
 - distributing campaign literature;
 - making campaign speeches;
 - writing or signing letters for publications soliciting votes;
 - initiating or signing nominating petitions;
 - registering voters;
 - driving voters to the polls in “get-out-the-vote” efforts;
 - acting for a political party at a polling place;
 - organizing, managing, or holding office in campaign organizations;
 - attending or being active at political rallies and meetings;
 - taking a prominent part in primary meetings or caucuses; or
 - serving as delegates to party conventions.
- hold office in partisan political clubs or parties.
- express your opinion on political subjects and candidates.
- be a candidate for election in a nonpartisan election.
- be a nonpartisan candidate for election in a **partisan** campaign in political subdivisions designated by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).
- contribute money to political organizations.
- attend (but not host) political fundraising functions.

Prohibited Activities

You may not engage in the following activities:

- engage in political activity while
 - on duty,
 - in any room or building occupied in the conduct of Government business,

- wearing an official insignia identifying your office or position, or
- using any vehicle owned or leased by the Government.
- use official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of an election.
- knowingly solicit, accept, or receive a political campaign contribution from **any** person, **unless** the solicitation is for a contribution to the multicandidate political committee of the labor organization, and the person being solicited is a member of the same labor organization, but not a subordinate employee.
- run for a partisan political office (unless permitted by OPM).
- solicit or discourage the political activity of any person who: (1) has any application pending before the Department, or (2) is a subject or participant in an ongoing audit, investigation, or enforcement action being carried out by the Department.

Employee Protection from Coercion

It is a crime, punishable by fine of not more than \$5,000 or imprisonment for not more than 3 years, or both, for any person to coerce or attempt to coerce an employee to engage in, or not to engage in, any political activity.

3. Approval of Outside Employment

Employees must receive approval before engaging in employment (including self-employment) outside the Federal Government. This rule does not apply to memberships in or volunteer work with charitable, religious, social, fraternal, recreational, public service, civic, professional, or similar nonbusiness and nonprofit organizations; and performance of duties in the Armed Forces, Reserves, or National Guard.

Follow these procedures when obtaining approval:

- **Employee:** Complete Parts 1 through 7 on form EMS-368, Request for Approval of Outside Employment, and submit them to your immediate supervisor.
- **Immediate Supervisor:** Complete Part 8 of the form and submit them to an appropriate approving official (see below).

- **Approving Official:** Complete Part 9 and mail to the EMS Employee Relations Section for filing, **or** return the request to the employee through the immediate supervisor.

Approving Officials. Only agency heads may approve outside work that involves (1) consulting, advising, teaching, lecturing, or writing; or (2) a foreign entity (government, corporation, partnership, or individual). Otherwise, depending on the requestor's grade level, other officials may approve outside employment:

| | GS-15 or above | GS-12 to GS-14 | GS-1 to GS-11 |
|----------------|---|---|--|
| ERS | Deputy Administrator or Division Director | | |
| NASS | Administrator | Deputy Administrator or Division Director | Branch Chief, Deputy Division or Staff Director, or State Statistician |
| EMS | Director | Branch Chief ¹ | |
| EAS, OE & WAOB | Director or Chairperson | | |

4. Summary of Responsibilities

Agency Heads

- Designate officials to approve outside employment.
- Ensure that employees adhere to all Federal laws regarding employee conduct and employee involvement in political activities.

Employee Relations Section, EMS

- Provide information and guidance on employee responsibilities and conduct to the employees of the Economics agencies.

Classification and Employment Branch, EMS

- Ensure that each new hire receives a copy of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics' "Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch," and the Department's "Employee Responsibilities and Conduct."

¹EMS branch chiefs themselves should seek approval of their division directors.

- File all requests for outside employment in official personnel folders.

Supervisors

- Ensure that employees adhere to all Federal laws regarding employee conduct and employee involvement in political activities.
- Recommend action on employee requests for outside employment.

Employees

- Request permission to engage in outside employment.
- Be aware of all policies outlined in “Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch” and “Employee Responsibilities and Conduct.”
- Adhere to all Federal laws regarding their overall conduct and their involvement in political activities.